Requiem for the Ravenstag

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Requiem for the Ravenstag

by VictoriaAGrey

Summary

As Hannibal and Will settle into life in Cuba, Will starts to see flashes of memories he can't recall. Memories he knows Hannibal can unlock.

Notes

For dorkbait. I hope I was able to tap into everything you love for this one <3

See the end of the work for more notes

The bitter dregs of fitful sleep clung to the edges of Will's mind as he roused himself enough to catalogue his surroundings. A warm oceanic breeze was ruffling the stray hairs on his forehead, their movement tickling his skin. The air smelled strongly of coffee, eggs, and possibly bread. His sprawl meant that he was alone and had been for quite awhile. Finally opening his eyes, Will blinked to adjust to the brightness of the sunlight coming in through the open windows, the sight of his boat floating at its dock instantly comforting him.

Dragging himself out of bed and into the bathroom, Will splashed water on his face and stared absently at the evidence of too many sleepless nights. The bags under his eyes were getting heavier and the dark circles more pronounced. His pallor was starting to look drained even though he now sported a tan. Running his fingers through his beard, he contemplated trimming it before deciding to leave that decision until after breakfast.

A plate of toasted Cuban bread and sliced fruit was waiting for him on the island in the kitchen when he made his way downstairs, proof enough that Hannibal knew something was amiss because he was now accommodating him by preparing small, simple breakfasts when he was more inclined towards preparing a larger affair. As he bit into the fresh bread, he poured the metal carafe full of coffee into the steaming cup of milk and watched it blend, adding a cube of sugar once it settled. Taking a sip of the café con leche, Will let his gaze wander outside where he saw Hannibal moving through the coffea trees, his stride sure and confident as he verified their health. He felt a smile pull at his lips, the sight of Hannibal toiling away over his trees making him smile because of its relative normalcy.

Feeling something nuzzle against his leg, Will looked down and the smile that had been threatening to come out shined on his face. "Good morning, Lulu," he said as he bent down and scratched behind the black and white mutt's ears. "Food more important than keeping me company this morning?" At the mention of food, she ran outside and joined Hannibal amongst the trees. Will marveled at her casual treachery. Picking up a slice of papaya, he walked outside to join her.

Will stood unassumingly in the shade of the trees watching Hannibal carefully open coffee cherries to inspect the beans inside. His deft fingers split the fruits, juice dripping down his fingers and into the fertile soil. The beauty of Hannibal's ruthless hands so delicately examining the giving flesh calmed Will in a way he couldn't put words to. He took a moment to absorb the feeling and the hot sun soaking into his skin, a pair of Bermudas his only protection.

Hannibal's eyes flicked in his direction, lingering longer than usual before turning back to the cherries. "Is today the day, Will?"

"It's as good a day as any."

"And yet on all past days, it has not been the day," Hannibal replied, dropping the cherry and the beans into their respective baskets before looking at him with a critical expression. "What changed?"

“The need for the truth outweighs my desire to continue to hide from it.” Dipping his finger into the café con leche, Will spun his finger through the liquid, licking off the coffee when he put it in his mouth. He knew that it would irk Hannibal, but he needed a distraction from his piercing gaze. There was also a small part of him that knew he did it with the express purpose of irritating him. “It’s locked inside my mind and you have the key to the door.”

“Some doors are best left unopened.”

Remembering what he saw in the mirror, Will shook his head. “Not this one.”

Hannibal seemed to accept his insistence, his expression becoming less scrutinizing as he walked towards him. He extended his hand and laid it on his arm, the contact abruptly reminding Will of how transparent he was to him. With nothing more than a look or touch, Hannibal could cut through the layers he used to protect himself and unflinchingly see everything that coiled beneath the surface. Will gripped his hand for a brief moment before leaving him to shower ahead of their session.

An old, well-worn feeling settled over him as he stood underneath the water’s spray. Everything about the last six months was new and different, but this he knew. The familiar thrill of going to see Hannibal, have his motives and motivations picked apart until nothing but the truth remained. This he knew and welcomed with fervor knowing that his sleepless nights would finally be coming to an end and whatever had happened years ago would be resolved.

After the shower, Will put on a white polo and pants and made his way towards Hannibal’s office through the grand hall. It was one of his favorite aspects about the old coffee plantation Hannibal brought them to when they first arrived in Cuba. The walls were white plaster, the strokes of the brushes that applied it to the wall giving it texture, and the wood beams that lined the ceiling seemed to elongate the hall that ended in a window wall overlooking the ocean. He loved that about the house, how its old world character blended seamlessly with its more modern aspects.

Hannibal’s office carried on in much the same fashion. It had the same walls and beams, the only difference being that the modern influences came in the form of art deco furniture, all sweeping sharp lines and symmetry. It retained the same warmth he had felt in Hannibal’s Baltimore office, the feeling reinforced by the pointedly placed chairs facing each other. Will immediately took the seat opposite Hannibal and felt soothed by the familiarity of the movement as well as Hannibal’s three piece suit. He didn’t even know he had one.

“The wheels of time continue to turn and yet here we are, returned to the beginning.”

“Our beginning is murkier than most.”

“Requiring repeated and in-depth analysis,” Hannibal conceded. His hands folded in his lap and his head tilted as he observed Will. “What do you hope to accomplish with this session, Will?"

“I still only have slivers of those drugged sessions when you were psychic driving me. There’s something there, I can feel it.”

“And as you know, the drugs I administered blocked the proteins that convert short term to long term memory. You were lucky to retrieve what slivers you have.”

Years ago, it was difficult enough to make Hannibal consent to just not lie during their sessions. His bald-faced honesty was still occasionally disorienting even though he was getting used to it.

“There are ways of retrieving repressed memories, purposely repressed or otherwise, and I know you know them.”

Hannibal shifted in his seat, his back becoming straighter and his look stern. “This is a dangerous thread to pull on, Will. Much like a spider’s web, there are mysteries best left unraveled.”

“What sin did you commit, Hannibal? What’s in here,” Will said as he tapped at the scar on his forehead, “that you don’t want me to see?”

“It is not my sins I wish to keep from you.”

Will felt his eyebrows furrow at Hannibal’s heavy statement. There was something trapped in his subconscious, buried beneath a quagmire of flashing lights, seductive drugs, and seizure responses. Ever since their plunge into the Atlantic, he caught flickers of it, of tentative hands and slippery reality. He didn’t know what it all meant at first, until one day when he recollected the plunger of a syringe. That’s when he knew that whatever it was, it came from the time he tried desperately to forget when he was with Molly, a time when he had someone who knew him. Now that he was here, Hannibal securely at his side and a pressing need to know, that he finally gave in.

When Hannibal’s eyes moved to look out to the ocean, Will knew that he was relenting, clearly believing that he was giving him the rope to hang himself with. Without a word, he stood and walked over to an armoire to retrieve a lit metronome. He set it on the table next to Will and started it, its familiar 60 bpm clicking washing over him as Hannibal closed the curtains and sat back down.

“I want you to close your eyes, Will, and imagine you’re on a staircase,” Hannibal instructed, his cadence deepening to a soothing tone. “There are ten steps between you and being submerged under the warm water, each stair taking you deeper. Do you see the water?”

It was roiling like the Atlantic. “Yes.”

“The water is calm, Will. Still. It welcomes you.” The water lapping at the stairs calmed until it fell motionless. “I’m going to count to ten. At each count, you take a step down into the water. One.”

Water rippled beneath his feet as he moved down to the first stair, the water thick and warm. “Two.” Half his calves were now wet with his mind’s water. “Three.” Up to his knees. “Four.” Now a portion of his thighs. “Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine.” All that was left exposed was his nose to the top of his head. He took a deep breath, knowing what was coming and preparing himself as best he could. “Ten.”

The water swallowed him whole, steeping him in a world that looked similar to the one he was in, but was decidedly not his. Hannibal's office darken and seemed to melt at the edges, the waxy pull of his reality slipped away and he was back in the Baltimore office, a foggy haze hanging over the place.

"Is something wrong, Will?"

Hannibal's face looked like something in a Salvador Dali painting, scrambling and moving like it was putty. Will stared at it, horrified and mesmerized in equal measures. It was oddly beautiful, so reminiscent of who Hannibal was as a person. The face continued to shift until his facade was restored, bright and devoid of flaw.

"What do you see?"

Will felt his mouth move, the word slipping out as if he himself said it. "Mirror."

Will felt himself convulse, but there was a stability now that he knew didn't exist then. He watched as Hannibal observed him, his hands twitching, as if he wanted to reach out and touch the madness. The sweat dripping down his face tasted like the ocean.

"What do you see in the mirror?"

"You." His face started changing again, his lips thinning and cheekbones becoming less severe. "Me." The moving pieces of his face settled into a perfect image of both of them, their faces combining into one glorious visage. "Both."

The antlers of the ravenstag grew out of the crown of his head. "You see us together? As one?"

"It's -" Will reached out, his arm shaking as it reached out for a version of his own face, one mixed perfectly with Hannibal's. Something in Hannibal caved then, the need to touch shattering his resolve to leave Will to his own devices. Once he was within reach, Will framed his face with both his hands, the skin of Them cold to the touch and hard as marble. "It's beautiful."

Hannibal's hands removed his from Their face, cradling them as if they were precious. "Remarkable."

"On the count of three, you will extricate yourself from the memory. One."

The fog turned acidic, eating at the image and creating holes in the waxy picture.

"Two."

Will fought it, trying to hold onto the dream, unwilling to let its details slip away again. Their face mouthed a goodbye as his body shook.

"One."

Gasping as he came to, Will reached out and immediately made contact with Hannibal, the lapels of his jacket clutched in his hands. Hannibal's hands rested on top of his, reassuring and present.

"I knew. All of it. I knew everything."

"Yes."

Will looked into Hannibal's eyes for any trace of deception, but there were none. His mind reeled at the possibility, rebelling even as the truth of it sank into every fiber. He gradually loosened his grip on Hannibal and he pulled away, taking his seat after stopping the metronome and giving Will the space he needed. Running his fingers through his sweat damp hair, Will ruminated over everything he saw.

"Remarkable."

Looking up, Will glanced at Hannibal and saw unhindered reverence in his eyes.

"Moving through the world trying to solve its various puzzles, and there you were, staring into the face of the biggest one. Completed and begging to be seen."

"I didn't want to see."

A shadow of sadness lingered over Hannibal's face. "I would ask for forgiveness, but this is a sin of both our doing."

Drugged and with his brain on fire, Will had figured out not just who the Chesapeake Ripper was, but that Hannibal was everything he was looking for but gave up on finding. The perfect mirror for his image, reflected back brighter and with infinite understanding. It was why he went to him for a second session. Entwined his life with his in as many ways as he knew how. Ran to him when he had a blackout.

Why, when the scales dropped and he *saw*, his betrayal was tinged with a sense *I should have known*.

It was because he did and he liked what he saw. If Hannibal had never framed him for his murders, he never would have seen the truth his mind already knew. Hannibal's betrayal made him *see*.

"That whole time you knew what I saw and you never lost faith?"

"With understanding comes acceptance. You already understood me, time would only tell if you would accept it."

Will's heart hurt in empathy. "You waited years."

"And I would have waited years more if I knew we would end up here."

Will stood from his seat, legs still shaky from the shock, and made his way over to Hannibal. Kneeling between his legs, Will reached for his face and reveled in the warmth of his skin.

Hannibal leaned forward, turning into the touch inches from Will's face.

"You didn't want to hurt me."

Hannibal shook his head. "You've come so far, Will. I feared that if you knew, you would begin to doubt yourself again. Pick apart your flaws to find the error. I did not want to send you back to that dark place."

"You would've been by my side."

"Every step of the way."

Closing what space was left between them, Will kissed Hannibal with a gentleness that belied his purpose. He wanted him to feel every bit of affection he himself had shunned by telling himself it was wrong. To convey that what little distance still stretched between them was gone. That he would never again have to fear that he would stray, sneaking away in the dead of night on his boat to never to be seen again.

They were in this together every step of the way.

End Notes

Thank you for your kudos, comments, critiques, angry banshee screams, or whatever you leave for me here or at my Tumblr ***mycroft-silently-judges-you***

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